(iii) Visits by officers of BSNL are made to the concerned Department for recovery of outstanding dues.

Demand of mobile SIM cards

973. SHRI BALVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:
SHRI RUDRA NARAYANA PANY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of persons provided with BSNL mobile SIM cards, so far;

(b) whether there is heavy demand for these SIM cards;

(c) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor;

(d) the total number of persons seeking the above connection enlisted in the waiting list; and

(e) the steps likely to be taken by Government to clear the above waiting list?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) As on 31.1.2005 , Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has provided 86,99,352 cellular connections in the country.

(b) to (d) Yes, Sir. Due to countrywide coverage and good quality of service, there has been a demand of BSNL's mobile service in the country as can be seen from the fact that capacities added are translated into subscriber and as on 31.1.2005, 86,99,352 subscribers are availing the service fully loading the existing capacity. Even though, as a policy, no waiting list is to be maintained for cellular connections particularly in a highly competitive environment, however looking into the heavy demand of BSNL mobile, maintenance of waiting list has been authorized in some States and 10,06,670 applicants are in the waiting list as on date.

(e) The expansion of the network by 12 million lines during the year 2005 is under roll out with an aim to provide cellular connections on demand.

Intra-circle traiff for NCR towns

974. SHRI T.S. BAJWA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that BSNL is issuing Punjab Telecom Cards instead of NOIDA circle cards denying subscribers intra-circle tariff for NCR towns;

(b) whether subscribers calling Delhi and NCR towns are not only required to pay double charges but also to use STD codes;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether Government would direct BSNL to look into the issue and ensure subscribers of Delhi-NCR towns are allowed intra-circle tariff?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) BSNL is issuing India Telephone Cards (ITC) which are not circle specific and are valid all over India from BSNL Network. The tariffs of calls are dependent on originating and terminating station.

(b) and (c) The calls from India Telephone Cards (ITC) are pre-paid services for which separate tariff is applicable as per the policy of BSNL. Using ITC, calls can be made between Delhi and NCR towns without STD Code also.

(d) Does not arise in view of (b) and (c) above.

Use of post offices as service centres

975. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of post offices and the strength of their workforce; and

(b) whether Government proposed to utilize the post offices to be used as service centres in outsourcing business to make them work without budgetary support?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) There are 1,55,,669 post offices in the country with a workforce of 4,87,643 employees.

(b) there is no proposal for utilizing post offices as service centres in outsourcing business. However, the vast reach of the network is being leveraged to offer a range of products and services to customers on behalf